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DIALOGUES

ON THE

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RIGHTS

OF

B R I T O N S,

BETWEEN

A FARMER,

A SAILOR,

AND

A MANUFACTURER.

DIALOGUE THE SECOND.

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MDCCXCII.



DIALOGUES, &c.

FARMER.—MANUFACTURER.—SAILO.

Manufacturer.

I HAVE thought a good deal upon our conversation of yesterday ; and though I find I was before mistaken in some points, yet I see many objections remaining to the state of things in this Country.

Far. That, perhaps, is not much to be wondered at, considering what pains have been taken to make you dissatisfied and disgusted with every thing ; though I should rather have thought, that, finding yourself imposed on in being made to believe that we have no Constitution, and that the Taxes are laid heavily on the Poor to supply the luxuries of the Rich, you would have no confidence in those who had told you such gross and abominable falsehoods.

Man. But can I shut my eyes against the Inequality that exists in this Country? Allowing that we have a Constitution which preserves to every one Liberty and Security, and that the Taxes are imposed with the utmost consideration for the Poor, which I own you have convinced me is the case, is it not a mortifying thing to see some men wallowing in all the luxuries of life, while others are obliged to work hard in order to obtain common necessities? Would not Equal Laws prevent such a Disparity?

Far. I believe, if the matter were fairly examined, it would appear, that those who procure their subsistence by the labour of their hands, enjoy much more true happiness than those who indulge in all the luxuries of life. But you altogether forget, that those luxuries of which you complain as a proof of Disparity, besides contributing largely to the necessities of the State, furnish necessary and copious resources for the subsistence of the labouring class. How many hands are employed, how many families comfortably maintained by such means! What numbers would be unavoidably reduced to the greatest distress, if such sources of employment were cut off! Think not, however, that the difference between those who labour for their bread and those who abound in wealth is to be ascribed to the Laws; such Inequality is founded in Nature, and inseparable from Society. The Laws neither make any man

man rich or poor ; they leave every one to the efforts of his own industry, and all they can do is to protect him in the exercise of that industry, and in the enjoyment of the fruits of it. Now it is well known, that in no country in the world is that protection so complete as in this, and we accordingly see that in no country is industry so successful. Nowhere do Trade, Agriculture, Manufactures, flourish as among us. Nowhere is there found such certain employment, such ample recompence for the Labourer, the Manufacturer, and the numerous other classes of those industrious persons who form the most numerous and the most necessary part of Society. And it is equally open to every one by talents and application, with the aid of opportunity, to rise into stations of eminence and wealth. Such are the peculiar advantages of a Free Country ; and in the nature of things Society, Government, and Laws, can do no more.

Man. They are very fortunate who can advance themselves in that manner. But I think you said just now, that those who labour hard for their subsistence have no occasion to envy such as enjoy all the luxuries of life. This, I own, sounds a little strangely in my ears.

Far. It is nevertheless true. The labouring class necessarily forms the most numerous part of Society, and their labour not only consti-

tutes the strength and the riches of a State, but is indispensable to its existence. Their condition is not indeed wealthy; if it were, they would be little disposed to benefit Society by their labour, and then neither the conveniences nor the necessaries of life could be procured, and their wealth would do them no good. But, on the other hand, they do not properly come within the description of Poor, since by their *own industry* they maintain themselves and their families. They have the strongest and surest claim for a recompence adequate to their maintenance. This is the first claim that must be attended to, and all others must give way to it. Their situation is therefore a respectable one as it is both useful and independent; and such persons, in the honest exercise of their industry, have no reason to regret the humble simplicity of their station, the peculiar advantages of which are at least equivalent to all that rank or opulence can bestow.

Man. And pray what advantages can possibly belong to that station beyond others?

Far. Advantages of the most important kind, and on which Nature has stamped the highest value. Do not the essential blessings of health, vigour, and content, seem to be particularly allotted to persons in that situation, while the luxuries

tries to which they are strangers, and which they would be fools to covet, generally produce disappointment, disgust, and indisposition both of body and mind? Observe the tranquil mind, the steady and cheerful labour, the sure and welcome reward, the robust health, the keen relish, the family endearments, and the calm repose of the industrious peasant, and tell me what other station has an equal chance for real happiness.

Sai. Egad! you speak so home to my mind, that if ever I should be so unfortunate as to be taken from a sea life, I had rather go to live in a cottage than a palace.

Far. Your attachment to a sea life is only one of the many proofs we see every day, that man, in every rank, is a creature of habit, and can seldom find his enjoyments out of the accustomed channel. Supposing the advantages for happiness equal in the higher and lower stations, nay supposing, for argument sake, that those advantages were increased with elevation (the contrary of which is, I believe, the truth), Do you think that such advancement would be a source of felicity to the Labourer? Would it be any gratification to him to be taken from his

* The farmer doubtless remembered that a wise man had said, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. *Eccl. 5. 12.*

familiar associates, from his homely thought substantial fare, from his regular sleep and meals, from his plain, easy, and simple manners, to make him undergo the ceremonies, the refinements, the fashions, the intercourse, and the restraints of higher life? Would not this be taking him from himself? Soon would he wish to return to his crackling fire and his simple unfettered habits. Besides, as happiness cannot be enjoyed without employment, what would he be able to substitute for the plough, the loom, or the chisel? Would the Manufacturer be made more happy by wearing the silk which he has been employed to weave? Or, in short, Could there be a severer punishment inflicted on the Peasant than that of making him a Peer?

Sai. That is very true—just as if a Foremast-man was made an Admiral of a large fleet before an engagement: he'd soon wish to go back to his gun, to obey orders and fight the enemy in his old way.

Far. No doubt of it; and it would be as much better for the service as for himself. The truth is, a great variety of stations must exist in Society, every one of which benefits the rest. The bodily labour of the lower class is essential to the utility, and indeed the existence, of the whole, while the mental exertions, the commercial speculations, the ambitious schemes, the more polished manners, nay

nay even the refinements and the luxuries, of the several ascending ranks, return the benefit, and conduce alike to the comfort and happiness of inferiors, and all join to promote the general advantage. In all, however, the chief source of felicity is Content. This, after all, is the grand secret of human bliss ; and this blessing impartial Heaven (to make the balance even, and to take away all cause for complaint at an apparent Inequality) seems to have destined chiefly for those who occupy the humblest walk of useful life, and subsist on the labour of their hands. On them chiefly is this treasure bestowed, for purposes the most wise and the most kind both to themselves and to Society, of which the only solid basis is their quiet and cheerful industry. What a wretch then must he be who seeks to make these happy and valuable people exchange their Content for Restlessness and Dissatisfaction ! How cruel and inhuman to them,—how mischievous to Society,—is such an attempt ! How particularly censurable and malicious in a country like this, where every Artizan and Mechanic is as much within the sure protection of the Laws as the highest Nobleman ! And yet such a scheme, black and diabolical as it is, is the grand object of Mr. PAINE's writings ; and you (*to Man.*), I am sorry to say it, are a melancholy instance of its effect.

Man. I cannot deny it, but what could I do? I now feel the force of what you say; but the system of Equality appeared to me so fair and just, that I could not help wishing to see it realized.

Far. I sincerely lament that so good a disposition as yours should have been deluded from happiness by the artifices of designing men. If you think for a moment, you will see that the system of Equality (supposing it practicable) would be a source of misery to Mankind. It must be obtained either by raising those who are in low stations, or by depressing those in high ones, so that all might be brought to the same level. Now I hope that I have already said enough to shew that it would be unfortunate to those of the labouring class, and ruinous to Society, if such persons were raised from that useful station in which Providence has placed them, and on which so many advantages are bestowed—and they would suffer equally if their superiors were reduced to the same rank with themselves; since the many springs of industry which are now set in motion by the luxuries and manners of the rich and great, would thereby be instantly cut off. In short, the different parts of Society have their respective uses and functions, and depend upon each other as much as the different parts of the body—and subordination is equally necessary in

in both—nor should envy take place, while all contribute to the felicity and comfort of the rest.

Man. That, I cannot deny, is the real case; but I have been told that Nature made Mankind equal, and if so, why cannot such Equality be preserved.

Farr. If you consult Nature, you will soon be convinced that she never intended Mankind to be equal. If that had been her intention, she would have formed them equal in bodily strength and mental faculties—similar in dispositions, and in all those properties which are now so variously bestowed among men. Nay, to preserve that Equality they must have been destitute of those passions which are the sources of rivalship, ambition, and contention; they must also have been free from those vicissitudes and changes which they are now subject to, and they must, in short, have been very different beings from what they are, and placed in very different situations. How can Nature be said to have made men equal, when at their first coming into the world there is such a wide difference as that between a child and its parents. Infancy, manhood, and old age, hunger, and sleep, rain, lightning, and tempest, and a thousand other natural causes, are at perpetual war with such Equality. Even if it were possible for men to subsist in a state of Nature, as it is called, that is, without Society,

Govern-

Government, and Laws, the Inequality proceeding from the above causes would soon become intolerable. A state of society is therefore their only resource, and may with propriety be called the natural state of Man, since he cannot subsist out of it. But the very formation of Society is incompatible with Equality, because its essential object is to vest in one part called Government a sufficient power to keep the whole in order, and in subjection to laws, and the possession of that power must elevate some greatly above the rest. — Subordination is therefore unavoidable, and there must be a great variety of ranks, of offices, and of duties, every one of which is destructive of Equality.

Sai. I suppose such a difference is as necessary ashore as it is at sea, where we have different duties, which would never be performed if we were all equal in rank and power. If all were Captains, who the devil would heave the water out of the long-boat?

Far. Neither at sea nor on shore can Mankind adopt in practice the levelling system without involving themselves in anarchy and ruin. Not even a private family, consisting merely of ten persons, can maintain peace and decorum but by the aid of subordination. How then is the large family of the State, containing as many millions, to be regulated without the same assistance? But I beg you to

to observe, that the Inequality arising in and from Society, is of a very different kind from that which must take place in what is usually though erroneously called a state of Nature. In the latter it would be destructive of all peace, order, security, and happiness, for it would be all in favour of the strong, the violent, and the vicious. But the inequalities of Society are really calculated for the benefit of all —without them the objects of Society could not be obtained—they actually conduce to a substantial Equality—an Equality in freedom, in security, in the enjoyment of those important Rights which belong to social Man. These very apparent Inequalities, directed and controuled by such a Government as ours, tend as much as human means can do to promote an Equality of happiness. They form an indispensable part of that system which protects every one in the pursuit of his own happiness, while he does not annoy that of others, nor disturb the general tranquillity.

Man. But the modern system is not to establish Equality by itself, but along with Liberty, so that they may help each other.

Far. I know *that* is the pretended fashion in France; but as we are not out of our senses, such a fashion has not been adopted in this country.—Liberty and Equality is the burthen of their song who wish to turn the world upside down, but so far from aiding each

each other, as you suppose, no two things are so opposite and inconsistent. They are like fire and water, and must destroy each other. It is impossible they should subsist together. Every thing in Nature tends to Inequality, and while Nature is at all free, while Liberty exists in any degree, Inequality must arise. The most absolute force must be exerted, the most violent despotism must be exercised to preserve Equality: and then it will be more in name and appearance than in fact: for nothing can entirely subdue Nature—she will be breaking out in spite of all resistance. Turkey is the country of Europe which approaches nearest to a state of Equality, because there the most absolute Despotism prevails. The Despot is the only exception, and (as ever must be the case where Equality is to be found) the people are equally slaves. If the weight were taken off which presses them to the same level, we should instantly find them rising in all those various gradations which are dictated by Nature.

Man. But you see they have established both Liberty and Equality in France.

Far. I deny that they have established either. Formerly, whoever spoke or wrote against the old Government, was clapped into the Bastille, from whence there was at least a chance of being delivered.—Now, whoever speaks or writes against the present System, is sure to have his throat cut, or to be hung at a lantern-post.

post. Judge if that be Liberty. And as to Equality, there is no pretence to *that*, except what arises from general confusion. The people are indeed deluded by the name, but while many thousands of the industrious part, who formerly subsisted very comfortably, are starving for want of employment, their rulers, who are in fact a thousand times more tyrannical, insolent, and overbearing, than any King that ever sat on the throne, are improving the opportunity their situation affords of accumulating Fortunes. Such is their boasted Equality ! But let the *French* be or do what they please, is it consistent with the independent spirit of *Englishmen* to adopt *French* maxims, to imitate *French* manners, or to practise *French* principles ? That vain and ambitious People, our ancient and natural rivals, seem more than ever to covet universal conquest. They only pursue it in a new manner, by the dastardly means of exciting the people to revolt against their lawful Sovereigns: but such as listen to them will soon find out their error, and learn, to their cost, that they have embraced Slavery rather than Liberty. Fearful of our valour, these new-made pretended Patriots treat us outwardly with respect, while they have numerous Emissaries among us to excite us to confusion, and to make us discontented and disunited; hoping to obtain that pre-eminence by their artifices which they cannot expect from their arms. What a fine thing it would be for them, if we could be prevailed on to follow their example, even if you know of but one instance and evaded

and become a Republic ! We should soon become subordinate to them, and perhaps, like Savoy, form a new Department of the Country which we have so often made to tremble—We should, like the Brabanters, be deprived of our corn, and be made to exchange our silver and gold for French assignats—We should have the honour of paying contributions to French armies, and taxes to the National Convention. But happily we know that our consequence and our independence are inseparable from our Constitution and monarchical form of Government. As a Monarchy, we have risen to be the first State in Europe—We possess, thanks to our wise and brave ancestors, the best Constitution in the world—We will preserve it—and if ever it should be abused, which is not very likely, We will find our own remedy in the sense, spirit, and moderation of Britons, rather than in the example of Frenchmen.

Sai. Would I could meet with one of those French rascals who endeavour to make a disturbance in this country, egad I'd rub him well down with a good English oaken trowel : I'd soon make him wish to be toasting his frogs again at home.

Far. The chastisement would be just ; but what say you to those degenerate Englishmen who join with them in pursuit of the same object ?

Sai. Nay, now you are trying to get to windward of me ; but it won't do : I'll never believe

believe that any of my Countrymen can act so; though I dare say there are bad fellows among them too.

Far. Well, I don't wish to put you out of conceit with your countrymen, though your Friend here might probably be able to support what I have said. But there is *no* doubt that the *French* are as desirous as ever of reducing our power and consequence, of stealing our commerce, and of giving the death-blow to our national independence and our naval superiority. They are the same artful and designing People they ever were; and, in their Revolutions, they exhibit the same treachery and perfidy, the same fickleness and levity which ever marked their character. But they have also shewn themselves actuated by a brutal and sanguinary disposition, and capable of the most barbarous and savage cruelty, such as must inspire the mind of every *Englishman* with horror. We are a humane and a generous People, and have, thank Heaven, an insuperable aversion to Blood, unless when for our Honour we shed or lose it gallantly in the field. During all our popular commotions we never lost sight of Humanity; and even in the dreadful year 1780 the Mob did not hurt the hair of any man's head. But the *French* cannot be turbulent without being blood-thirsty;—while they have Liberty in their Mouths their Hands are engaged in Slaughter;—their Tree of Liberty cannot thrive, unless

the

the Soil be drenched with Blood. It becomes, therefore, every *Englishman* to say, “ From *French* Liberty the good Lord deliver us ! ”

Man. I am as much shocked as you can be at the horrid massacres lately committed in *France*, and I believe that *Englishmen* are incapable of such barbarities. But I cannot conceive how the little passage of sea between *Dover* and *Calais* can make such a difference in disposition between one people and another.

Far. There are a variety of causes which operate in forming the disposition of a people, and perhaps none more than the Constitution and Form of Government under which they live. Thus the *English* Character has acquired a vigour and a manliness from the Constitution, The consequence which every *Englishman* feels to belong to him as such, and the sense he entertains of the value of those important rights and privileges which he enjoys as his birthright, endue him with firmness and magnanimity, and inspire him with a sense of honour, and a dread of disgrace;—while his disposition, formed under the mild and genial influence of legal, orderly, and salutary Freedom, is as open, humane, and generous, as it is bold and brave. Every species of cruelty is repugnant to his nature ; he is as ready to forgive and to succour as to fight ; and he will no more hurt or even insult a vanquished

quished foe, than he will yield the palm of victory while he has strength to dispute it. Nor is there a People in the world so distinguished for their benevolent bounty as the *English*. Munificence and Charity are here displayed beyond all example and without ostentation ; and Woe, which, by the laws of Nature, is ever attendant upon the condition of Humanity, is sure among us to attract pity and relief. Thus may it be said, that to live under the Laws and Government of this Country, tends to refine and improve Human Nature itself, and to cultivate the growth of its noblest virtues.—In like manner do the principles of the Constitution favour the success of honest industry and of useful enterprise. Where do we find Commerce and Manufactures flourish as in this Country ; where are the Labourer, the Artizan, or the Mechanic, so certain of employment ? Where is Diligence so sure of Success, and Merit of a Recompence ? And to what is this owing, but to the fostering hand of the Constitution, which bestows Liberty and Security as an universal boon upon all ; inspiring thereby confidence and satisfaction ; and encouraging, while it protects, the Labours of the Hand, the Exertions of the Mind, and the various Efforts of useful Industry.

Sai. I hope, Brother, by this time you are satisfied, else I cannot imagine what the devil you would have. And as for TOM PAIN, or any other lying lubberly rascal who tries to put

put Englishmen out of conceit with their Country, and to stir up such a happy People to mutiny, he deserves death a thousand times more than a robber or even a pirate.

Far. Such wretches deserve both execration and punishment; but I fancy they suffer very severely in the disappointment of their hopes. It is no small mortification to them to see that universal attachment to the Constitution, and that ardent and enthusiastic loyalty to the King, which a grateful and affectionate, a sensible, a free, and a happy people display with such zeal and fervor. These sentiments and feelings existed before; they are indeed inseparable from the heart of every true Briton; but they have been called forth, at the present moment, into such loud and universal acclamations, by the daring and mischievous attempts of wicked Incendiaries who sought to excite Insurrection and Rebellion. The people saw themselves insulted, vilified, and menaced. They have joined their hands and raised their voice even to Heaven, to vindicate their honour from the foul aspersion of disloyalty, and to testify their regard for those rights for which their ancestors struggled and bled. The British Lion is roused, and shews himself determined to defend the Throne and the Constitution from all foes both within and without, and woe to those who dare provoke his vengeance.

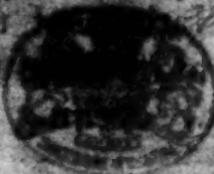
Sai.

Sai. All traitors at home will, I hope, meet with their deserts ; and believe me, the wooden walls of Old England were never in better condition of defence against all foreign foes, should any dare either to attack or to insult us.

Far. That is certainly true, and I will add, that such is the tried valour, such the steady and unshaken fidelity both of the British Army and Navy, that our honor and our interests are secure against the whole World. With such gallant protectors we may rest easy and undisturbed, and thank Heaven for distinguishing us with so many and so great advantages, beyond all the Nations of the Earth. But, for the present, I must conclude our conversation ; and to-morrow evening we will resume it again.

END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

team as a substitute to start off the tournament.



END OF THE SECOND MESSAGE